

Remarks

Claims 7-20 and 37-40 are pending in this application.

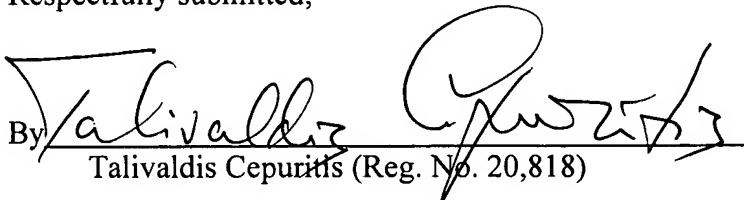
Claims 1-6 and 21-36 have been canceled without prejudice.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 7-12, 17-20, and 37-40 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form incorporating all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claims 7, 8, 37, and 40 have been rewritten in independent form, as suggested, and thus are now in form for allowance. Claims 9-12 depend on allowable claim 8, and claims 13-16 have been amended to change their dependency from canceled claim 1 to allowable claim 8. In addition, claim 39 has been amended to change its dependency from canceled claim 30 to allowable claim 37. No new matter is introduced by any of these amendments. Claim 17 was already in independent form, and thus has not been altered in the present amendment. Thus, each of claims 7-20 and 37-40 is in form for allowance.

All other issues raised in the Office Action, i.e., with respect to 35 U.S.C. §112, 35 U.S.C. §102, and obviousness-type double patenting, have been rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 1-6, and 30-36, as well as the changes in dependency of claims 13-16.

Early allowance the present claims and passage of the application to issue is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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